



PO BOX 1306
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Meeting Agenda for: Thursday, December 21, 2023, 4:00pm – 5:15pm

Raley's Conference Room: 40041 CA-49 #49, Oakhurst, CA 93644

Or join us via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86999943919?from=addon>

To receive documents provided to those in attendance at the board meeting, please email kayla.rohrbaugh@crcd.org with your request no later than 3pm the day before the meeting. Items provided to directors prior to the meeting will be emailed with the agenda to all recipients requesting to be on the distribution list.

4:00 Call to order 4:04

Approval of the Agenda – All approved

Introductions

Public Comment **Please limit comments to 2 minutes**

Public asked for more information regarding tree work being done on Indian Springs Road. CFSC had funds remaining from another project and CalFire recommended that Indians Springs could use roadside work. Jon informed her that he will reach out to EMFSC for further details.

4:05 Consent Agenda

Approval of the Minutes: All approved.

Financial Report: All approved

4:10 CRCRD Reports

Firewise Report – Kelly Green – See attached report.

Executive Director Report – Jon Cottingham – See attached report.

4:25 Old Business

- Regional Water Management Group – Jon was informed that CRCRD would have to adopt a second resolution, he did not move forward with this resolution because CRCRD does not qualify as a disadvantaged community. CRCRD does not have the funds available to join the group. The RWMG also will require tasks from CRCRD staff. CRCRD will not be a part of the group until the issue is resolved.
- NRCS Staffing – CRCRD has the opportunity to hire a part time registered forester for Forest Management. NRCS would like CRCRD to hire an employee that will work in the Madera NRCS office to work on EQUIP paperwork. NRCS would like CRCRD to train the individual for 2 weeks before moving to the Madera NRCS office. Jon has asked for an advance to cover payroll costs for this staff member. The board agreed that CRCRD can continue looking into the agreement. Further meetings will take place prior to any signing any agreement.
- Truck – CRCRD presented the board with 6 trucks to consider. The board approved CRCRD to move forward with purchasing a truck after the first of the year.

4:40

New Business

- Bank Account Security – CRCRD received a Notice of Data Breach letter from United Security Bank. United Security offered CRCRD identity monitoring services, but it would require us to close all of our accounts. CRCRD Board chose to move forward with our current accounts.
- Arbor Day Foundation – Jon and Lyndall worked together to create a proposal for a small-scale tree planting event. CRCRD has ordered 1200 saplings which will cover our Earth Day and Elementary School planting events in the spring. Jon will pursue other funding sources to upscale this project.
- Staff Handbook – CRCRD proposed a new staff handbook and updated PTO rate. The board approved the Staff Handbook barring a few typos.
- Board Elections – CRCRD currently has a Vice President and Director position open. CRCRD appointed Lyndall Erb as current acting president. CRCRD appointed Jay Seslowe as acting Vice President. CRCRD appointed David Konno as Treasure. CRCRD appointed Melissa Cottingham as Secretary.

4:55

Partner Reports

- NRCS – Mira Dick – not present
- Madera Dept of Water Resources – Jeannie Habben – not in attendance
- Madera County – Bobby Macauley – not in attendance
- North Fork Rancheria – Lance Fink – not in attendance
- CALFIRE – Mike Keyser – not in attendance
- Eastern Madera County Fire Safe Council – Ashley Nebeker – not in attendance
- Yosemite Sequoia RC & D – Erin Capuchino – not in attendance

5:10

Workshops/Events/Presentations

5:15

**Adjourn: Next Meeting January 11, 2024, 4:00pm @ Raley's
Conference Room & Via Zoom****Adjourned 5:15**

Sub-contractor Progress Report: Title III Firewise Coordination Program

Sub-contractor/partner: Coarsegold
Resource Conservation District

Reporting Period: November 2023

Report Preparer & Title: Kelly Green II
- Firewise Coordinator

Email address: kelly.green@crccd.org

Phone Number: 559.389.8781

Date: 12-12-2023

Progress reports are an explanation of what occurred during a one-month period. If no fiscal activity occurred, that is acceptable, but explain what did occur during the reporting period (challenges encountered, plans made or changed, etc.). Please include details about upcoming projects, workshops, or purchases that you will be making to accomplish the tasks/deliverables outlined in your scope of work.

Summary of activities that occurred during the reporting period (e.g., communities established, communities outreached, workshop coordination, products created/developed):

- Continued to distribute educational materials to existing and prospective communities.
- Maintained technical assistance and communication with all established Firewise® communities.
 - Nearly every established community needed assistance completing the renewal process due to changes implemented by Cal Fire.
- Previously scheduled work was completed in the following communities.
 - **Kletty's Pride** – Hazard tree removal, thinning and clearing vegetation near homes and outbuildings, chipping, and removal of green waste.
 - **Miami Highlands** – Green waste bins delivered for removal of vegetation that homeowners have removed from the defensible space around their homes. A chipping day for the remainder of the vegetation that has been removed from the roadsides.
 - **Stillmeadow Ranch** – Along critical egress routes roadside vegetation has been removed; larger trees were trimmed to reduce ladder fuels.
 - **Timber View** – Along critical egress routes roadside vegetation has been removed; larger trees were trimmed to reduce ladder fuels and brush piles removed.
 - **Meadwosprings** – Along critical egress routes roadside vegetation has been removed; larger trees were trimmed to reduce ladder fuels.
 - **Road 225** – Along critical egress routes roadside vegetation has been removed; larger trees were trimmed to reduce ladder fuels.
- Community Application Status
 - Indian Springs Road – Community Risk Assessment and 3-Year Action Plan ready to be submitted, resident leaders have created a community within the Firewise portal application to be submitted early December.
 - Crooks Mountain – No progress.
 - Ridgeline – Application was approved.
- Continue outreach to Resident Leaders in certified communities to
 - Remind all communities of the annual renewal process and offer technical assistance.
- Firewise community meetings, events, and presentations
 - Jon was invited to present the Firewise program for Sunrise Rotary.
- Social Media outreach on defensible space and home hardening to engage new communities.

Sub-contractor Progress Report: Title III Firewise Coordination Program

Relation of activities to overall goals, deliverables, and timeline. Please quantify progress where possible (e.g., XX community members engaged on MM/DD/YYYY for kick off meeting, XX new communities established, XX action plans developed):

- Continuing Resident leader discussion to help committees' complete projects for the 2023 year.
- Timely assistance to prospective communities has allowed for consistent progress in certifying new communities.
- Outreach to all Resident Leaders re: Scheduling contracted workdays, community meetings, Recertification deadline, Tool Cache reminder; continued assistance to individual communities as needed, including portal uploads for recertification efforts and new applications.
- Social Media outreach has increased the visibility in the community, leading to additional inquiries on the program.
- Review and updating maps in Arc GIS Pro allow us to quickly identify and quantify communities and surrounding forest service lands.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period and possible challenges in the future (e.g., meeting cancelled, unresponsive homeowner's, personnel change):

- CRCD continues to face the challenge of waiting for the in-progress communities to essentially make progress. Coarsegold RCD must wait for the committees to complete the application process in their own time.
- Lack of response for scheduling community meetings from approved Firewise® communities. Community members are not reaching out to scheduled meetings.

How challenges impact overall accomplishments and plans to remedy the situation (e.g., personnel change required additional time to onboard for program, but they began outreaching communities this month; unexpected weather required cancelling a risk assessment, but it has been rescheduled for next month, etc):

- CRCD continued outreach to individual resident leaders through email, site visits, and community meetings has kept energy high in recertification, as well as progress on community action plans. Some communities remain silent so continued correspondence will be necessary.
- CRCD continued outreach to prospective and in-progress communities.
- We have created a new project application that can be shared with the whole community to create a list of shovel ready projects in the community.

Next steps (please provide a brief summary or list of activities planned for the next month):

- Expand use of new Firewise surveys to streamline the process in larger communities.
- Continue scheduling the existing Firewise® Communities for contracted work.

Sub-contractor Progress Report: Title III Firewise Coordination Program

- Schedule Community meetings for every certified community to plan for future funds/projects.
- Continue to attend meetings and webinars for additional grant funding opportunities.
- Review Action Plans for each community to see where implementation funding can be used to the best advantage.
- Continue to be flexible and available to any community in need of assistance towards becoming Firewise®.
- Continue community outreach to find new prospective Firewise® communities.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
December 21, 2023

CALFIRE GRANT: We have filled the 39 slots in the Eastern Madera Fire Prevention Assistance Program. American Tree Medics are working through the list of applicants by assessing and removing the hazards in their defensible space. ATM has completed assessments and work is ongoing to complete the 39 homes. After looking at the December 29 deadline, ATM and CRCD amended the agreement for 30 days in order to expend all funds and complete scope of work. CRCD had to ask for an extension of the CALFIRE advance funds for an additional quarter to accommodate this change. Additionally, project planning within FireWise communities, the other part of this grant, is ongoing and requests for proposals will be going out in 2024, so we see no negative impact to the grant closeout date of March 2026.

MADERA FIREWISE® COMMUNITIES: CRCD has continued work on the Firewise program. We welcomed our 22nd FireWise community last month, Ridgeline Homes. We also had Indian Springs recognized just a couple of days ago. We also had 2 new communities, Thunderhead Drive, and NF Rancheria, start the process. We had 5 projects completed in the Klette's Pride, StillMeadow, Miami Highlands, Timberview, and Meadow Springs neighborhoods.

Last month, all communities had to renew their application. However, communities that are older than one year old are having to update their 3 year action plan by inserting into CALFIRE's new template. Over half of our communities had to update their action plans in order to fit into the new template. Some communities have been having issues with this update because the templates were not working on Mac computers. Kelly, Kayla and I had to assist those communities with uploading this information to the new template and eventually the FireWise portal.

CA FIRESAFE COUNCIL FIRE PREVENTION COODINATOR:

- **Oversaw CRCD's Firewise program, which had 5 projects completed and one new community recognized. All 22 communities were engaged regarding renewal of applications.**
- **Presented Fire Prevention information at the Coarsegold Community Center and Oakhurst Sunrise Rotary.**
- **Attended monthly CFSC County Coordinator meetings.**
- **Provided Outreach for CRCD's Low Income Defensible Space funding and YSRCDC's Storm Damage funding.**
- **Attended meeting with NF Rancheria about CRCD programs**
- **Attended CALVTP Training.**
- **Attended planning meetings with EMCFSC for upcoming RFFCP funding opportunity and submit proposal.**
- **Attended EMCFSC Quarterly Board Meeting**
- **Attended Cultural burn with YGPBC, Southern Sierra Miwuk tribe, and Sierra Foothill Conservancy**
- **Attended planning meetings with Madera County, CAL FIRE, CFSC, EMCFSC, YSRCDC, and YGPBC.**
- **Social Media outreach on defensible space and home hardening to engage new communities.**



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NACD/RCPP: CRCD had a meeting with NRCS on November 29 to discuss future collaborations. We are discussing the next round of RCPP funding as well as the NRCS TA agreement with NRCS to see if we can work together to have a shared staff member that will be covered by these agreements with CARCD. The next step will be to figure out how we can best make our partnership work more efficiently in the future. We will discuss this further under old business. But we will continue to present the NRCS programs to property owners as we meet with potential Firewise Communities. We also have links for the programs on our web page.

WCB Pollinator Block Grant: CRCD will be submitting the first report for this grant on April 20th.

We were busy last month with the Pollinator grant. We installed xerces habitat kits and seed from Great Valley seed company at Karine Wines (approx. 5,000 sq ft), Gaede Homestead (approx. 5,000 sq. ft), Yosemite High School(approx. 5,000 sq ft), and Wasuma Elementary (approx. 1,000 sq ft.). We held a volunteer event at Karine Wines with 16 people planting. We planted the Gaede homestead, in the Fork Fire scar, alongside the property owners. 4 periods of Mr. Irvin's Biology classes and the Eco Club came out to plant the high school habitat. And we worked with the 2nd and 4th grade classes at Wasuma elementary to install their habitat.

Melissa's 4th grade class at NF elementary has been working in our NF school pollinator garden to maintain the space. She led students to collect seed from the milkweed, aster, and goldenrod stands in the garden. They cleaned and packaged these seeds. Then they made infographics to explain how to plant, take care, and harvest seed from a pollinator garden. They gave these kits out to the Wasuma Elementary and Yosemite High sites. To celebrate their hard work, we gave them a small seed kit and hosted a coloring contest. The 3 winners received a little sweet treat, sticker, and a native plant (manzanita, ceanothus) of their own to take home and plant. The kids did amazing and we hope to have more of these project based learning opportunities in the future.

We continued site prep with our Senior Project at Mountain Oaks High School. This site will be prepped this year and we hope to apply for a xerces kit in the spring. We also met with the Spring Valley 4-H club to discuss the habitat that we plan to install in Spring Valley, hopefully in 2024. We spoke to 10 young gardeners about pollinators and left them with a small seed packet, courtesy of the seed collected by our NF students. The habitats will be going dormant through the winter but we will continue to monitor them as needed. We have discussed some other future sites for us to plan this winter and will discuss more as talks solidify.

CERF (Community Economic Resiliency Fund)

We attended virtual meetings in November to discuss potential economic models that local economies may benefit from and how potential projects fit in. We will be attending meetings in the new year to continue the discussion.

The CERF was created to promote a sustainable and equitable recovery from the economic distress of COVID-19 by supporting new plans and strategies to diversify local economies and develop sustainable industries that create high-quality, broadly accessible jobs for all Californians.

Jon Cottingham, Executive Director

Old Business:



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Regional Water Management Group: Although we discussed joining and adopted the IRWM resolution, CRCD will need to adopt another resolution, of which I have a template, to ask to join the group. However, I did not move forward with that resolution until we receive some additional input from the group. The current manager had to let the county know that according to current bylaws, RCD's do not count as a Disadvantaged group, which would require us to pay somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2000.00 a year to be a part of the group. While we wanted to be at the meetings for input and collaboration on possible projects, we do not feel it is not important enough to spend the very limited unrestricted funds that we have to be part of this group. If the county finds out this is not the case, or if the group changes its designation, I would like to move forward with joining, but not until then.

NRCS staff/ TA Agreement/RCPP

Last month, I attended a meeting alongside Kelly Kucharski (Executive Director of Sierra RCD) with the Fresno and Madera field offices of the NRCS, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist Johnnie Siliznoff, Chris Zimny NRCS State Forester, and CARCD representatives. The meeting was created by Kelly and myself in order to discuss our existing partnership and how that can improve with the new round of RCPP funding as well as the new NRCS TA agreement.

NRCS made it clear that they did not need the RCD's to provide funding for an forester or forestry technician to help improve the workflow on their end. They said that the main roadblock is the paperwork on the backend of these agreements. They agreed that the best way for our RCD's to assist them using this funding is to hire an employee of the RCD that will be housed in the NRCS field offices to assist with NRCS contracts. Between the two funding sources, it will pay for a full time employee that CRCD will only have to provide minimal oversight and will have access to for field related work, when necessary.

We are still needing more input from NRCS as to the little framework that is currently in place for this type of employee. We need to know that NRCS is fully committed to managing the person. Another large concern is the time lapse for reimbursement for payroll for this employee. Currently we are waiting around 3 months for reimbursement from CARCD for our pollinator program. If we have to wait this long for reimbursement for a full time employee, this may cause undue financial burden to the RCD. I have reached out to CARCD about possible advance funding for this position, Sophia Lemmo stated that they are still waiting for an answer back from NRCS on that subject, but she said it sounded promising. We should enter into the new RCPP program to open that funding up for Eastern Madera residents to use without having the new shared staff member, but the NRCS TA agreement requires us to hire someone with Forestry background. I am ready to sign the RCPP agreement, but feel we need to wait to sign the TA agreement until we hear more from CARCD and NRCS.

Truck – We are ready to revisit purchasing the vehicle using funds from the CALFIRE grant. We have \$28,000 from the advance to put towards the purchase. Staff has provided the board with some trucks that are currently available priced from \$36k-49k. A Tacoma is probably the best compromise between fuel



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economy, towing capacity, reliability, and price point from the list we provided. There are also some comparable deals with Chevy Colorado's, but staff felt that the Tacoma was the better choice between the two. The best deals that we found were ranging from \$40k-43k. Due to holidays and vacations, the purchase of the vehicle will not take place till January, but we are hoping that the board can give us approval to make a purchase of a vehicle that falls into the price, make, model range that we approve here today.

New Business

Bank Account Security - I want to discuss a letter that came in mid-November from United Security Bank. I attached a copy of the letter. Basically what they are saying is that a third party vendor who provides software services for the bank had a data breach in May 2023. Some information may have been accessed. They say there has not been any actual misuse of the information, but due to the nature of customer information, they want us to be aware of what happened. They have a Credit Monitoring Group that they have hired for anyone that may be affected. So options are to enroll in Identity and Credit Monitoring Services, close all of our accounts, or do nothing. When Kayla spoke with United Security about the threat, they said that our account was on the list of accounts that could have been impacted by the data breach, but they were not aware of any misuse. Kayla has made it clear that closing the accounts would cause a huge disruption in our workflow and we would have to spend hours updating our information with grantors and QuickBooks. Nothing has come of the breach as of this date. But we wanted to see if the board felt that we needed to act.

Arbor Day – Lyndall reached out to Arbor Day Foundation last month to make a connection to see if there was any collaboration possible. One of their Project Managers reached out to learn about CRCD and see if we had any projects in mind. I have corresponded with Ashley and let her know of the work we have done with One Tree Planted and NF school. She pointed us to a community event grant, similar to One Tree Planted, but also asked if we had a proposal ready to possibly share with corporate donors. I used my existing proposal for our Fork Fire reforestation and Oak sapling nursery. Lyndall shared some ideas with me as well and I blended the two to come up with a new proposal. They do not allow as much staff time on these grants as did One Tree Planted. Since I already had a budget for another event, I had hoped to use this. But I had to scale back due to the 20% facilitation cap (this is for staff time or items to facilitate day such as porta potty). I already have 1200 saplings on order from El Dorado RCD/NRCS. Lyndall thought it would be good to ask for more than I proposed, but with the 20% cap, I do not have another funding source to cover staff time if we increase the scope. I thought I'd see if the board had any opinions on the matter. If not, I will submit what I have currently. If we can create a good partnership, my hope is that funding like this could continue.

Staff Handbook/PTO Rates: Last month, I discussed possibly updating our PTO rates. The board asked me to complete the Staff Handbook and to include the updated rates. The staff handbook has been updated and provided to the board for review. Is there any question/ comments about any part of the updated handbook? If there is not, can we have a motion to approved the updated staff handbook ?

Before we switched bookkeepers, Teri from Tulare RCD let Julie and I know that our PTO accrual was lower than average for RCD's and non profits. At that time a rate of .0385/hr was mentioned as an



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average for us to use. Currently, Forbes states that 10-14 days a year is average for a company. Another site (Zenefits.com) stated that the average for CA is 9.7 days on top of sick and holidays. Julie has been updating our staff handbook. We looked to Madera/Chowchilla RCD's handbook for guidance and found that they too use a rate of .0385/hr, which calculates to 77 hours, or 9.7 days for a full time employee. The current grants have fringe benefits built in that will accommodate this change. We can't offer everything that's a standard company may offer (401k, health insurance) but we can think about offering an average amount of PTO to assist the flexible schedules we have to keep. Does the board have any input?

Board Elections – As terms end for board members, CRCD needs to hold board elections. Currently we have Jay as acting President, David as acting Treasurer, Melissa as acting secretary, and Lyndall is a Director. This currently leaves a Vice President position unfilled. I am hoping that we can have open voting to fill all positions. For the position of president, would anyone like to make a motion? Do we have a second? All approved? Let the record show that _____ has been voted in as the current acting President. For the position of vice president, would anyone like to make a motion? Do we have a second? All approved? Let the record show that _____ has been voted in as the current acting Vice President. For the position of Treasurer, would anyone like to make a motion? Do we have a second? All approved? Let the record show that _____ has been voted in as the current acting Treasurer. For the position of Secretary, would anyone like to make a motion? Do we have a second? All approved? Let the record show that _____ has been voted in as the current acting Secretary. Thank you very much board.

Workshops/Events/Presentations

There are no workshops or events for the remainder of December.